

Francis Preston Blair to Andrew Jackson, October 1, 1837, from Correspondence of Andrew Jackson. Edited by John Spencer Bassett.

FRANCIS P. BLAIR TO JACKSON.

Washington, October 1, 1837.

My Dear General, Your letters in relation to the movements of the new Bank conservative party are predictions already verified. What you said about their designs on the Printer, as a preliminary attack on the Administration was made perfectly manifest, before you got the news of it, and your second letter marking the transaction as a *Bell manuvre*, was spoken of by some to whom I showed it, as evincing a sagacity which could look deeper into things, at the distance of six hundred miles, than the penetration of others of our wise ones, with the whole affair under their noses. Every body now perceives that like Bell's plot about speaker, there is a presidential plot, beneath it. The scheme was, that Rives with Virginia at the head, was to carry off the whole south. Talmadge with the Bank northern power, it was supposed, would be able to make up a mixed party, that would with Whiggery, carry a majority in the money and trading region, so that the two together, as President and Vice President being the candidates of the Opposition (Clay, Webster and Harris being despaired of) would put an end to Mr. Van Buren at the close of the first term. So you see that Rives like Judge White was to reach the Presidency by a sudden leap. poor man! he already finds himself in shallows. The Whigs are willing to recieve him, but it is only on the terms that he will fall in at the tail. He must take his position in the rear of White and Bell. The idea of recognising him and Talmadge as leaders is not tolerated. They are ranked as non-commissioned officers.

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I told Benton, Linn,¹ Allen,² Coles,³ (who took a family dinner with me to day) what you said to me about passing events, especially in regard to Treasury notes. Benton immediately exclaimed that you were always right. To use his characteristic expression “*He does not himself know, how right he is*. Like a man who is so brave, that it costs him nothing of an effort to undertake the boldest achievement, and therefore does not consider it bravery the General's mind reaches just conclusions so easily, that he scarcely knows the magnitude of the truth which it gives him no labor to arrive at.” Benton, then, went on to tell us, how he had combatted the Treasury note System in the Committee and had finally made it a mere borrowing of money (gold and silver) on bonds at 6 per ct (or whatever less it could be got for) instead of issuing and reissuing continental paper. His whole argument was, he said, but an attempt to illustrate what you had laid down in a single line with so much force and truth. So we drunk your health as the man of this century, whose principles were destined to put down the new form in which tyranny has appeared under “*The Paper Dynasty*”.

1 L. F. Linn, senator from Missouri 1833–1843.

2 William Allen, senator from Ohio 1837–1849.

3 Walter Coles, M. C. from Virginia 1835–1845.

I think we are in a fair way to triumph gloriously. The voting will be close, and we may not succeed in Congress, but there is a Spirit among our friends that must carry out the good cause with irresistible power. The Opposition are evidently cowering. The speeches of Benton, Walker,⁴ Buchannan,⁵ Niles,⁶ Strange,⁷ (and though last not least) Calhoun's has carried dismay into the ranks of your old enemies and the deserters. Who would have expected in six months after you retired from the Presidency to hear Calhoun speaking of you as “*that great and remarkable man*”. There is now no danger of the Executive power, since the popular devotion to you is withdrawn from it!! So Calhoun can support the Administration, for there is *no longer danger of its being too popular with the people* !!!

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Could you have supposed that Calhoun would have been the boldest and most decided advocate of Mr. Van Buren's first message and that a thorough democratic message, and that Rives would have been the first and most prominent man to oppose it? Greedy ambition excited by the dream of the Presidency is too much for some men's honesty to withstand. Rives has abandoned himself to run after a shadow. He is now in full chase after the end of a Rainbow.

4 Robert J. Walker, senator from Mississippi 1835–1845.

5 James Buchanan was a senator from Pennsylvania at this time.

6 J. M. Niles, senator from Connecticut 1835–1839.

7 Robert Strange, senator from North Carolina 1836–1840.

The President and all our Headmen are well and talk of you with more affection the longer they miss you. All now admit the truth of the grand conception which directed all your measures to rid the country of the colossal paper and credit system, and all see that the bold steps you took, were right and *expedient* although some doubted the latter. . . .